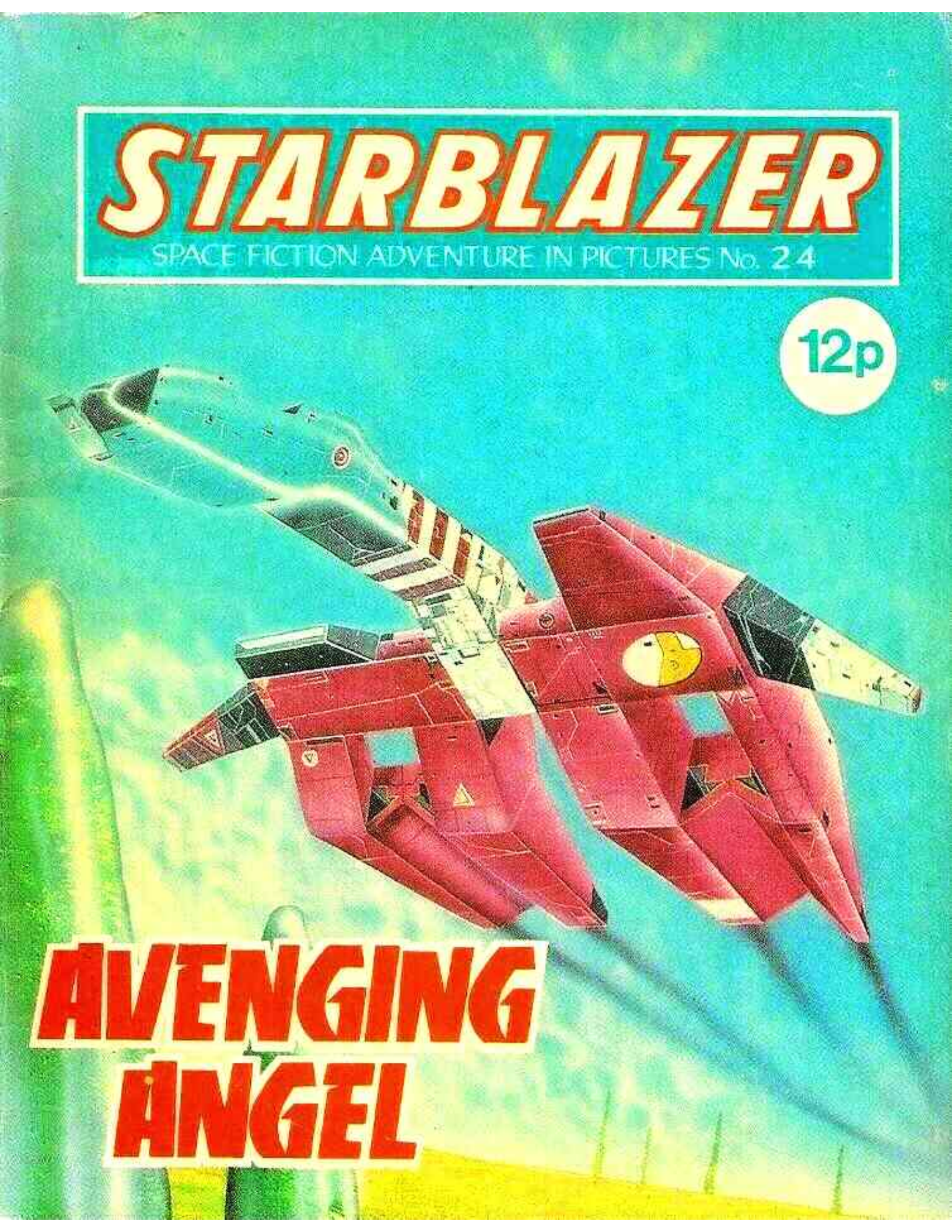
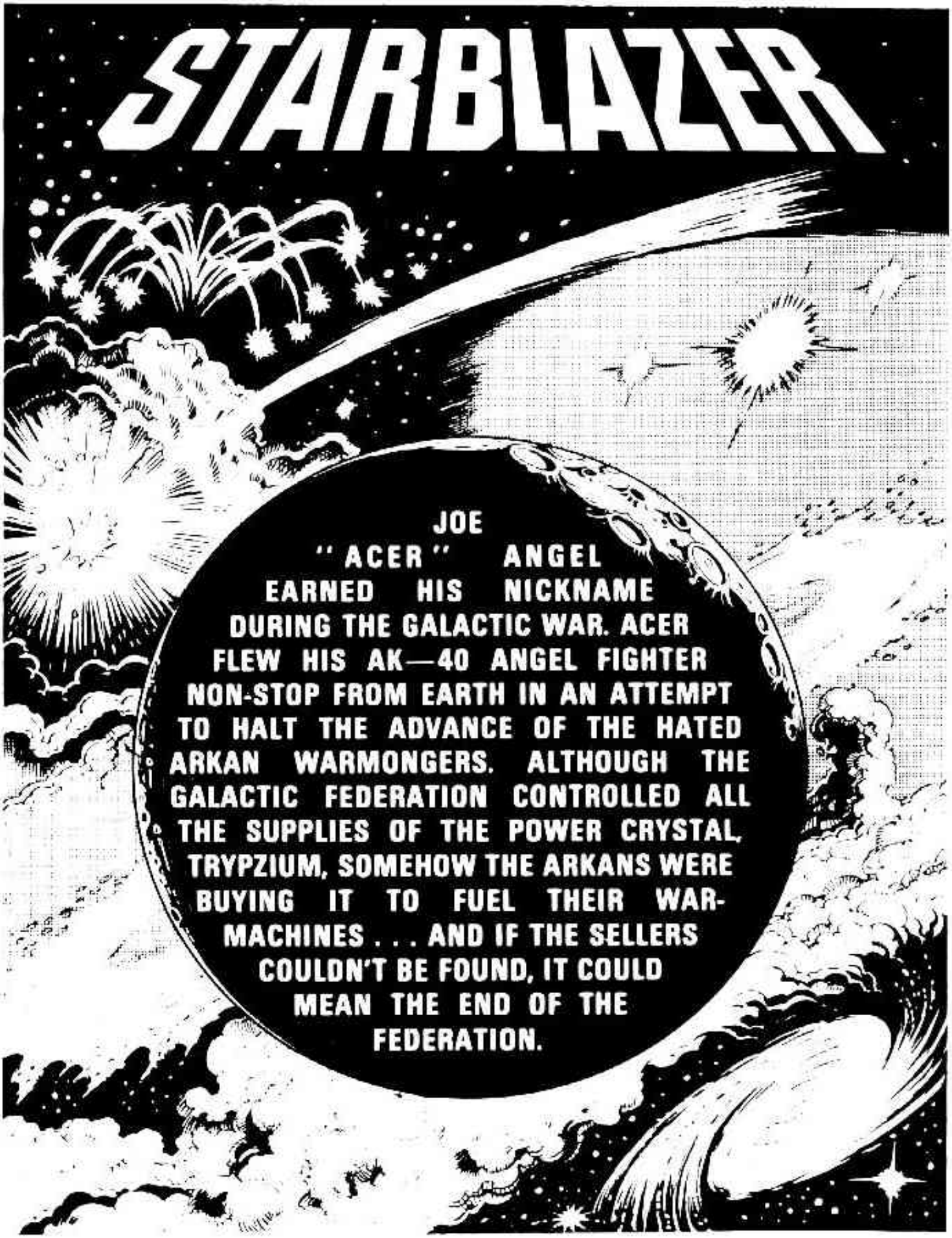
STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 24

12p



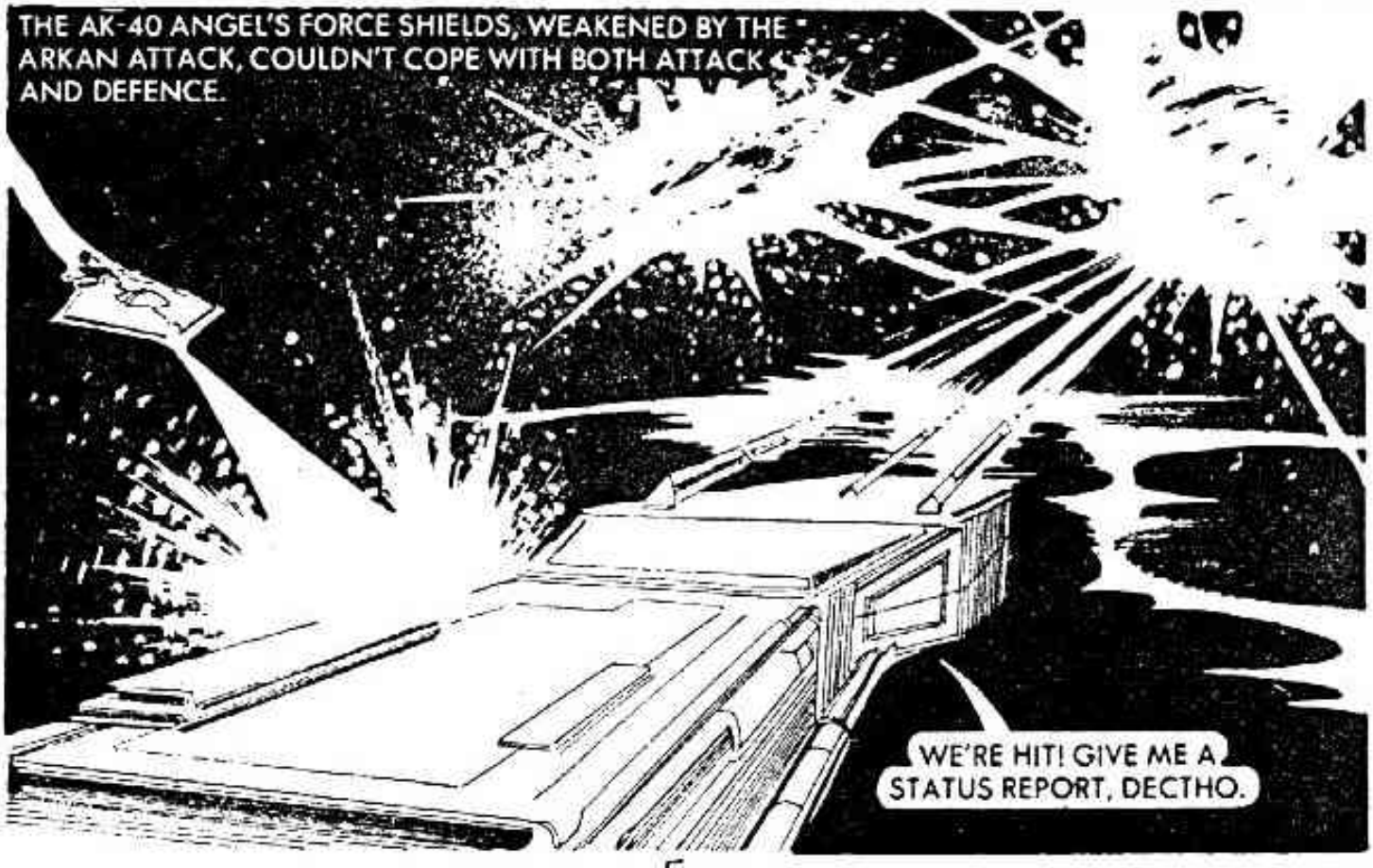
AVENGING ANGEL


STARBLAZER
JOE "ACER" ANGEL EARNED HIS NICKNAME DURING THE GALACTIC WAR. ACER FLEW HIS AK—40 ANGEL FIGHTER NON-STOP FROM EARTH IN AN ATTEMPT TO HALT THE ADVANCE OF THE HATED ARKAN WARMONGERS. ALTHOUGH THE GALACTIC FEDERATION CONTROLLED ALL THE SUPPLIES OF THE POWER CRYSTAL, TRYPZIUM, SOMEHOW THE ARKANS WERE BUYING IT TO FUEL THEIR WAR-MACHINES . . . AND IF THE SELLERS COULDN'T BE FOUND, IT COULD MEAN THE END OF THE FEDERATION.

eldubya/rodimepries

AVENGING ANGEL

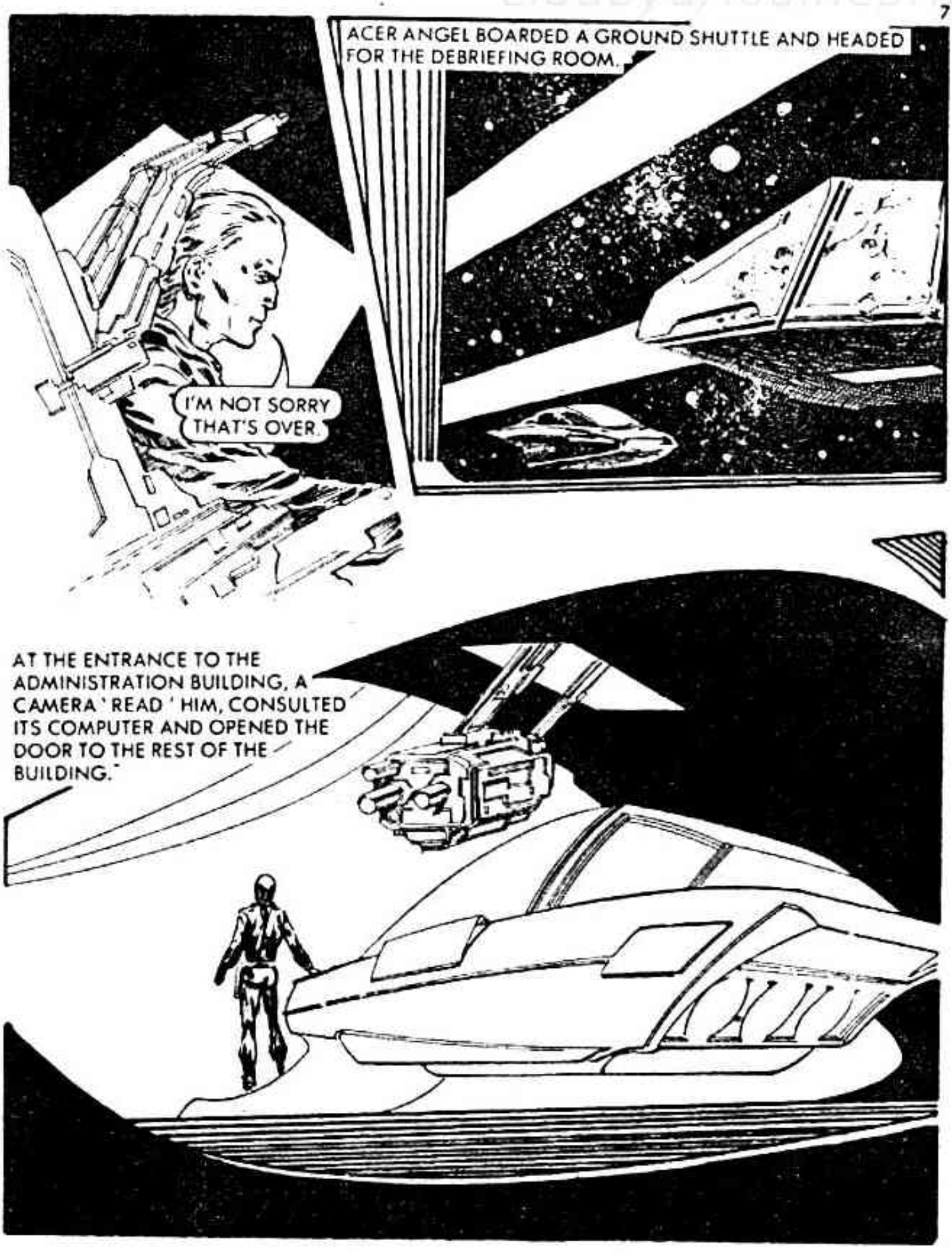
THE FORCE SHIELD HAS HELD . . NOW IT'S MY TURN TO ATTACK.


THE AK-40 ANGEL'S FORCE SHIELDS, WEAKENED BY THE ARKAN ATTACK, COULDN'T COPE WITH BOTH ATTACK AND DEFENCE.
WE'RE HIT! GIVE ME A STATUS REPORT, DECTHO.

eldubya/fodineprie

ACER'S NAVIGATOR, DECTHO, FROM THE PLANET VICTA, WAS WORRIED.
DISENGAGE . . . FORCE SHIELD INOPERATIVE.
WILL THEY CATCH US?
THEY MIGHT, WE'VE USED UP A LOT OF POWER.

ACER WATCHED THE POWER GAUGES BEGIN TO CLIMB.
THEY'VE GONE . . . THEY'RE OFF MY SCANNERS.
AH. WELL. BACK TO EARTH. BASE TO REFUEL.
SPACIALS LATER. ACER ANGEL TOUCHED DOWN A BATTERED FIGHTER. SAFELY.


ACER ANGEL BOARDED A GROUND SHUTTLE AND HEADED FOR THE DEBRIEFING ROOM.
I'M NOT SORRY THAT'S OVER.
AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, A CAMERA 'READ' HIM, CONSULTED ITS COMPUTER AND OPENED THE DOOR TO THE REST OF THE BUILDING.

ACER MADE HIS WAY TO LEVEL 1075, WHERE ALL MATTERS REGARDING THE ARKAN REBELLION WERE DEALT WITH.
COME IN, LIEUTENANT ANGEL.

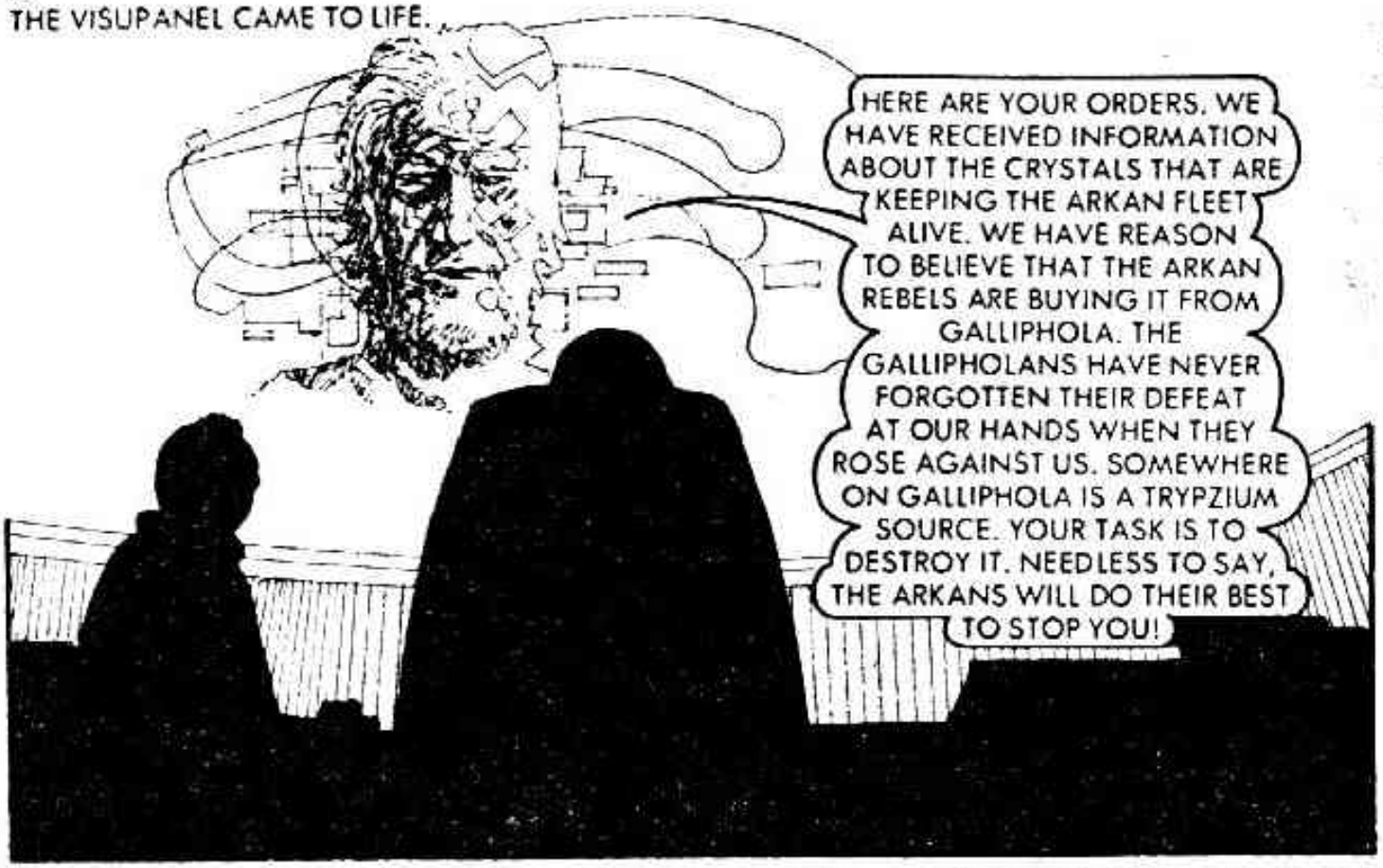
YOU WON'T NEED YOUR OLD AK-40 ANGEL NEXT TRIP—I'VE GOT A NEW ONE FOR YOU. AN ANGEL MKII. I EXPECT YOU'VE HEARD OF IT? YOU'LL NEED IT FOR THE DIFFICULT TASK AHEAD OF YOU. I'LL SEND YOUR ORDERS IN DUE COURSE.
ACER'S HOVSHUTTLE DRIVER, SAM, WAS WAITING FOR HIM.
HELLO, MASTER. I EXPECT YOU'RE KEEN TO SEE YOUR ANGEL MKII.
INDEED! HALF THE PILOTS IN EARTH FLEET WOULD GIVE THEIR TEETH TO COMMAND THE MKII ANGEL.
SAM PUNCHED THE CO-ORDINATES INTO THE NAVIGRAM AS THEY SPED AWAY FROM THE SURFACE.
I HEAR IT IS THE FASTEST VESSEL WE'VE EVER BUILT.
AND THE MOST HEAVILY ARMED, MASTER.

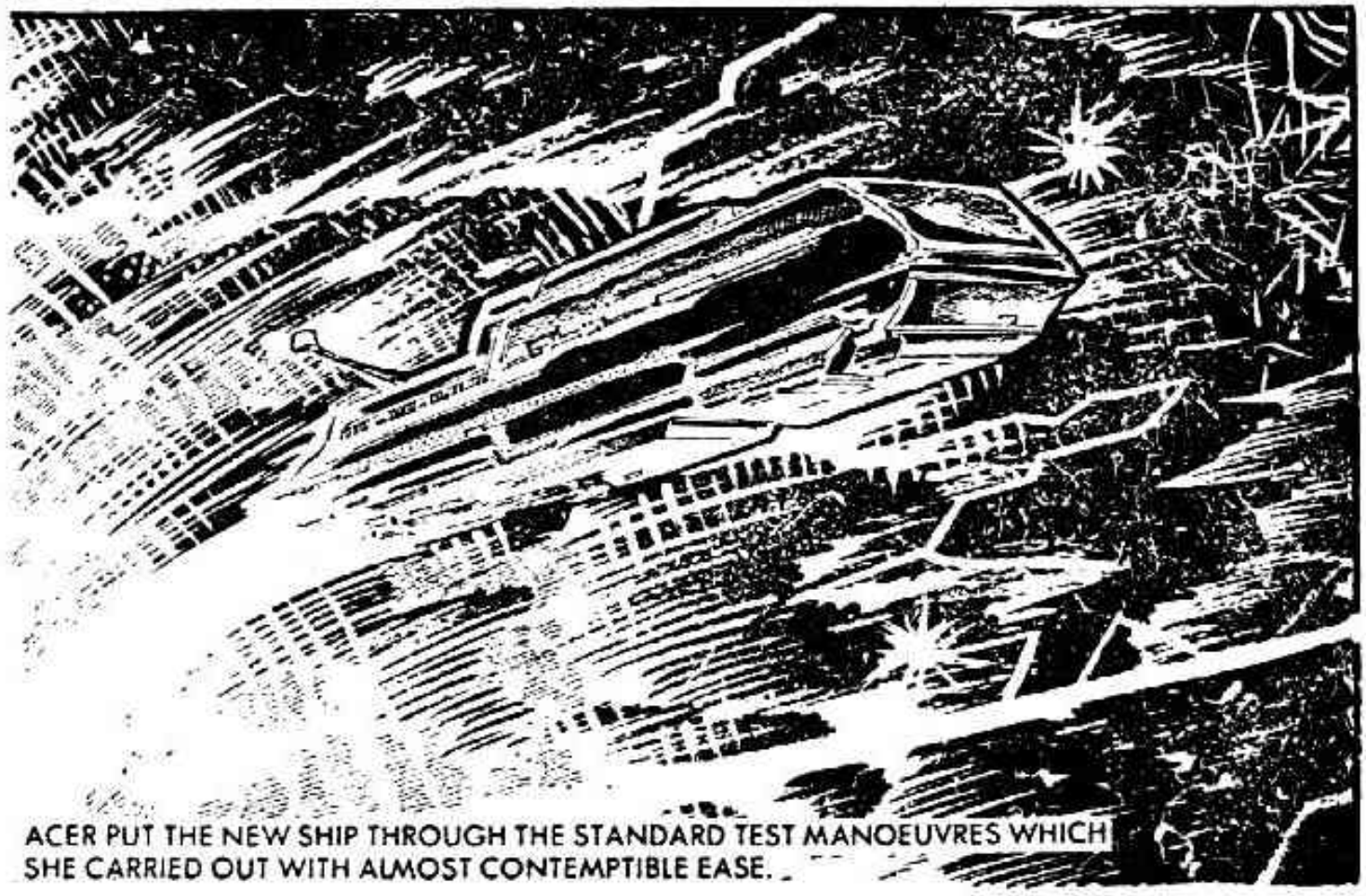
THE HOVSHUTTLE WAS DWARFED BY HIS NEW COMMAND.
WHAT A SIZE!

I SEE YOU GOT HERE AHEAD OF ME.
YES, MASTER. WELCOME TO THE AVENGING ANGEL.

IS IT TRUE WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE POWER BANKS, MASTER?
THE FORE AND AFT VISUPANELS FED THE DETAILS TO THE LASER CANNON. THEY COULD BE FIRED ON ACER'S SPOKEN INSTRUCTIONS, OR MANUALLY.
YES. THE SCIENTISTS HAVE DEVISED A WAY OF CONCENTRATING THE TRYPZIUM. WE CAN FIRE WITHOUT ANY DROP IN POWER TO THE FORCE SHIELDS FOR ABOUT FOUR LIFETIMES BEFORE THE POWER FAILS.

THE VISUPANEL CAME TO LIFE.


HERE ARE YOUR ORDERS. WE HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT THE CRYSTALS THAT ARE KEEPING THE ARKAN FLEET ALIVE. WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE ARKAN REBELS ARE BUYING IT FROM GALLIPHOLA. THE GALLIPHOLANS HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN THEIR DEFEAT AT OUR HANDS WHEN THEY ROSE AGAINST US. SOMEWHERE ON GALLIPHOLA IS A TRYPZIUM SOURCE. YOUR TASK IS TO DESTROY IT. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE ARKANS WILL DO THEIR BEST TO STOP YOU!

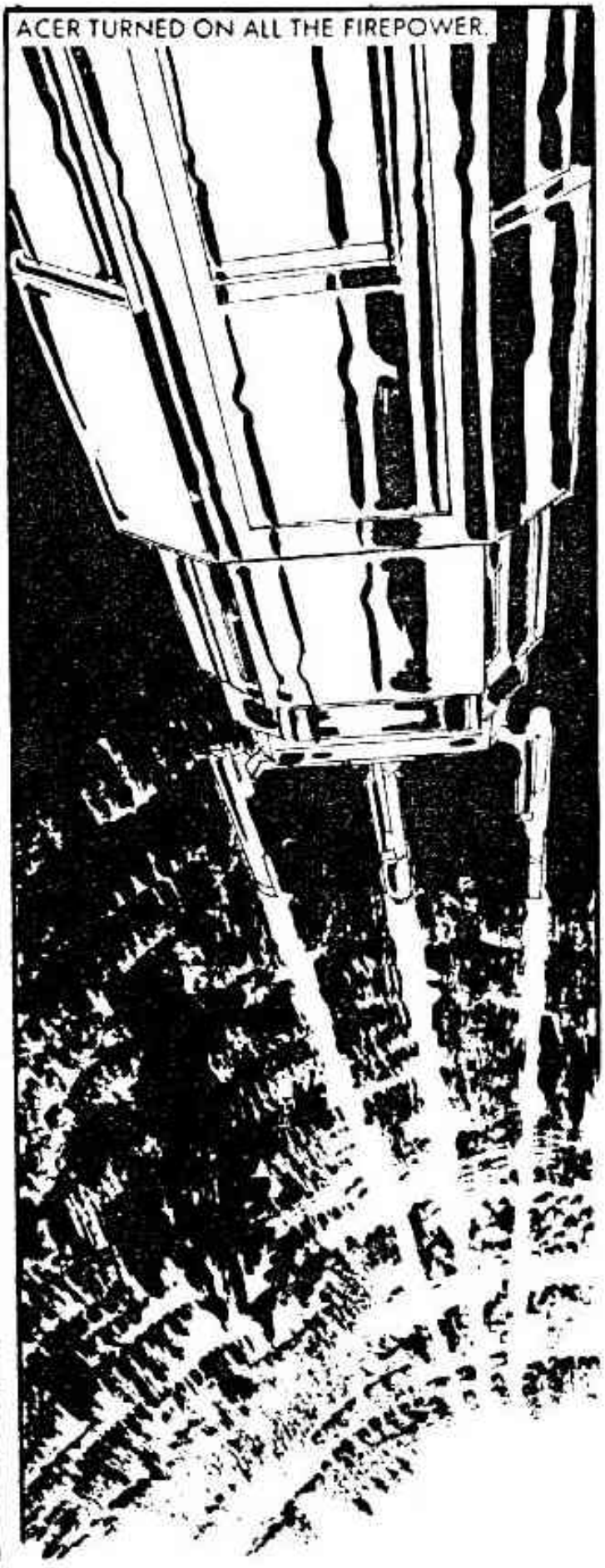


ACER PUT THE NEW SHIP THROUGH THE STANDARD TEST MANOEUVRES WHICH SHE CARRIED OUT WITH ALMOST CONTEMPTIBLE EASE.

eldubya/lodinepres

THE COMPUTER WAS PROGRAMMED ONLY TO ANSWER TO ACER.
157
COMP, WE NEED SOME GUNNERY PRACTICE. KNOW ANY DEAD PLANETS WE CAN VISIT?
AFFIRM. INGED 7, XENAN MINING PLANET DRILLED OUT 4,000 CYCLES AGO. NO LIFE. SOME STRUCTURES STILL ERECT.

WHAT HAVE WE GOT, DECTHO?
A GROUP OF OLD ACCOMODATION BUILDINGS. WELL WITHIN RANGE.


ACER TURNED ON ALL THE FIREPOWER.

eldubya/lodinepries

COMP, WHERE ARE WE?
POSITION ON GRID 273X.

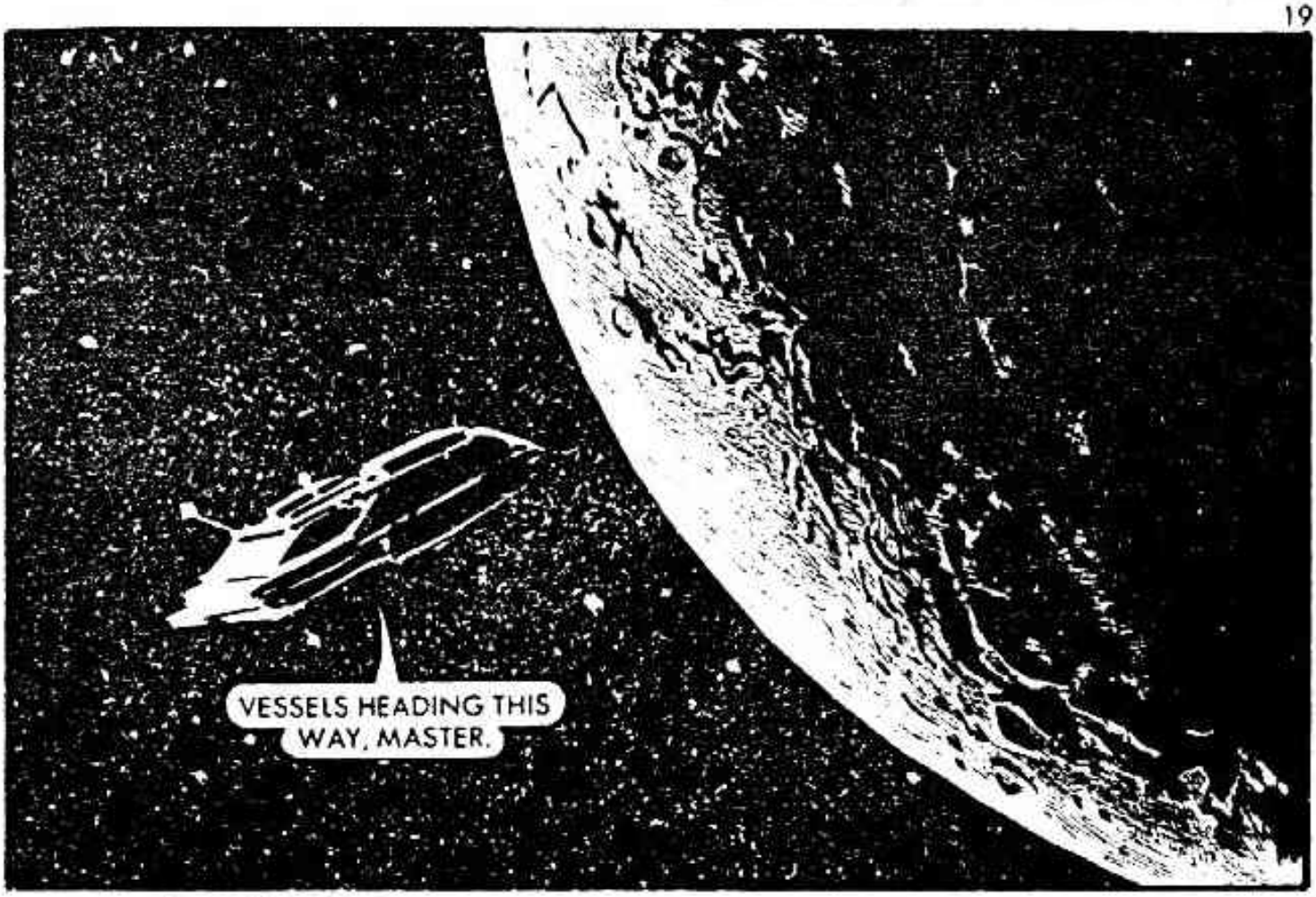
YES . . . THAT IS US.
SO WE ARE THE LIGHT. EARTH IS THERE. I SEE WHY WE DON'T NEED CHARTS!

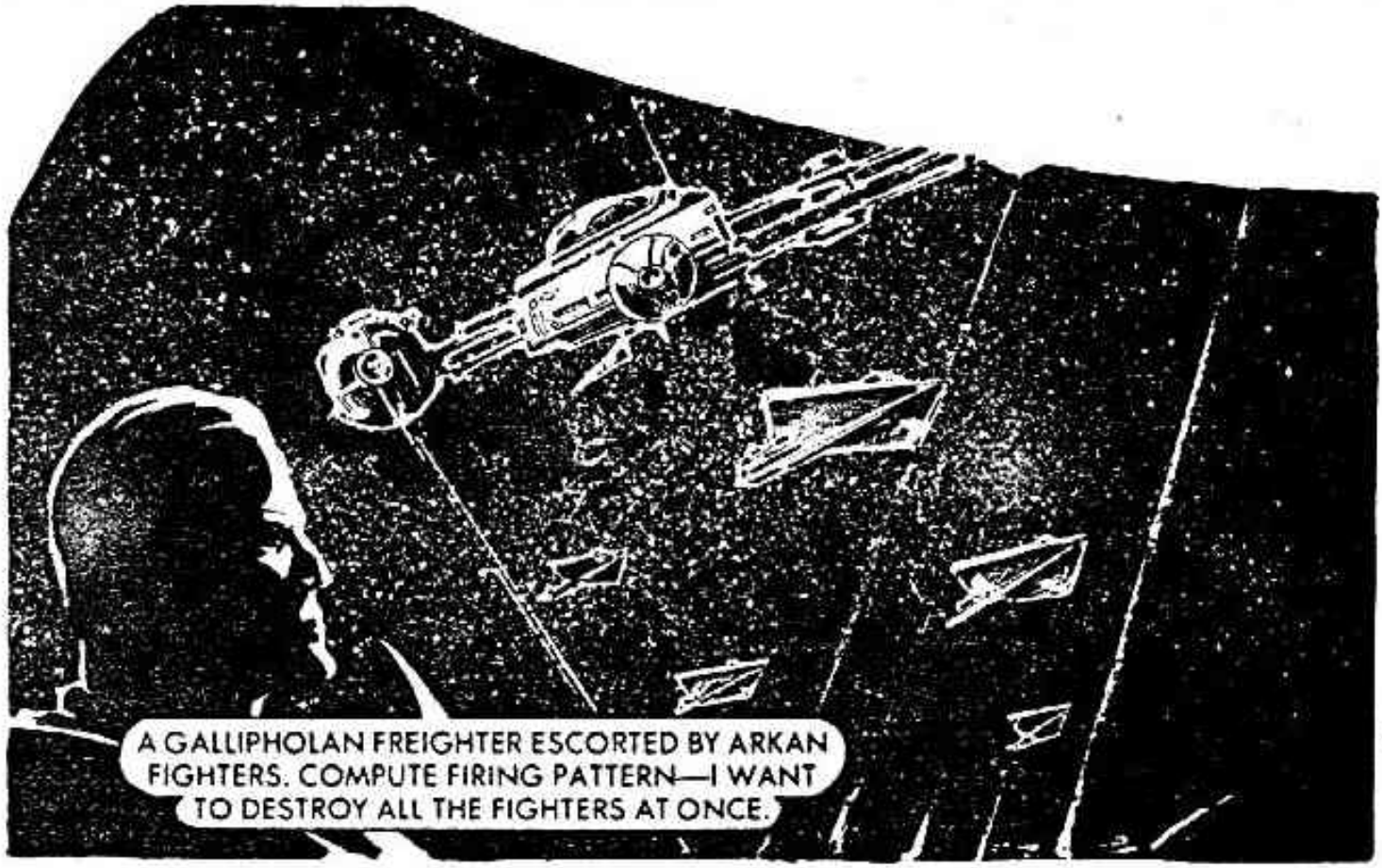
eldubyafiodineprie

ACER! THE SCANNER INDICATES LIFE AND POWER SOURCES.
WHERE?
DIRECTLY BELOW—ON KELLA II, WHICH IS MEANT TO BE UNINHABITED.
THE TRYPZIUM POWER SOURCE SNAPPED THEM THROUGH A SAVAGE ACCELERATION AND ACROSS THE LIGHT BARRIER.
SANDSTORMS LASHED THE JAGGED SURFACE OF KELLA II WHERE HUGE SAVAGE, LIZARD-LIKE ROKAS ROAMED.

ACER LOCKED INTO ORBIT HIGH ABOVE THE PLANET.

eldubya/lodimepres

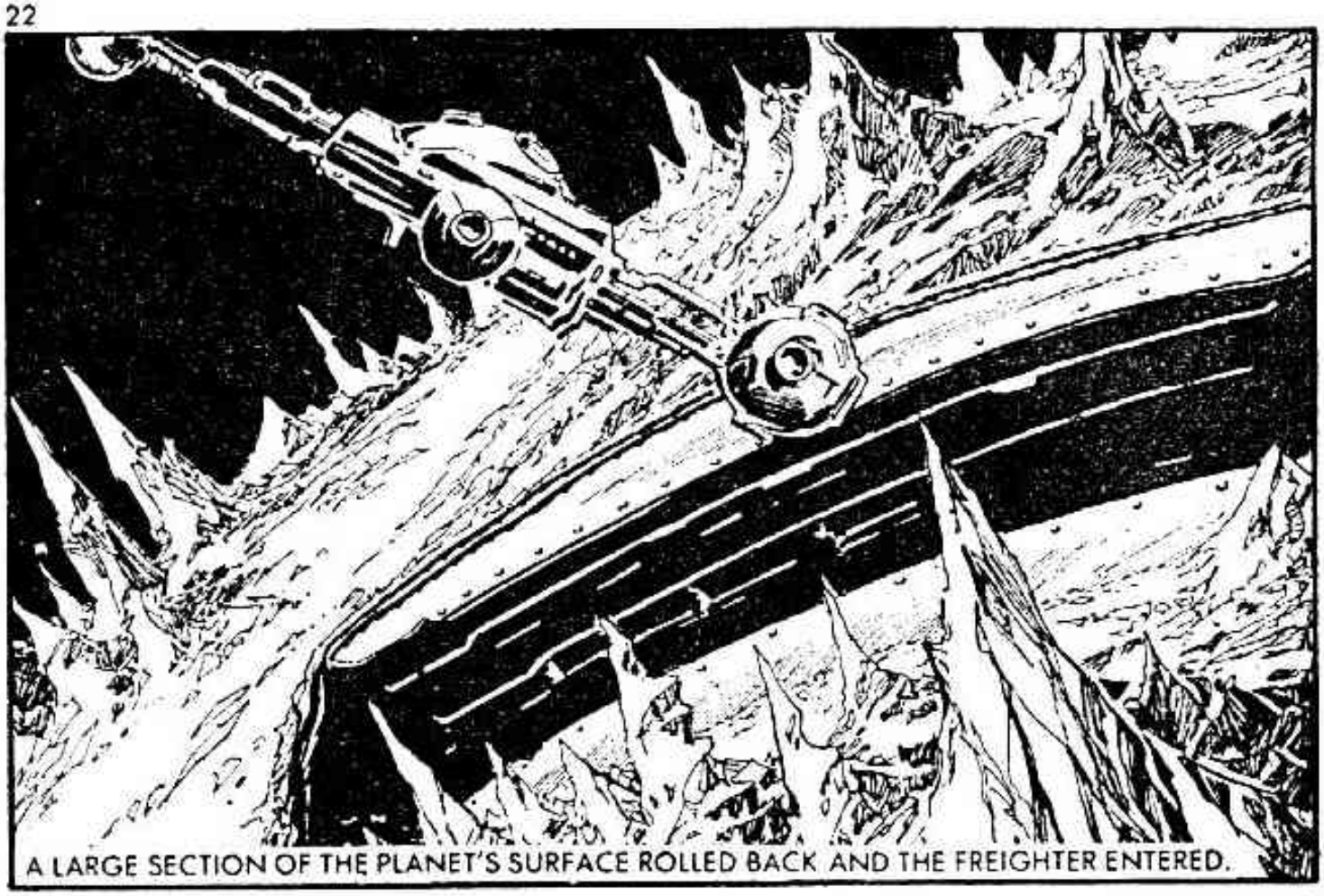




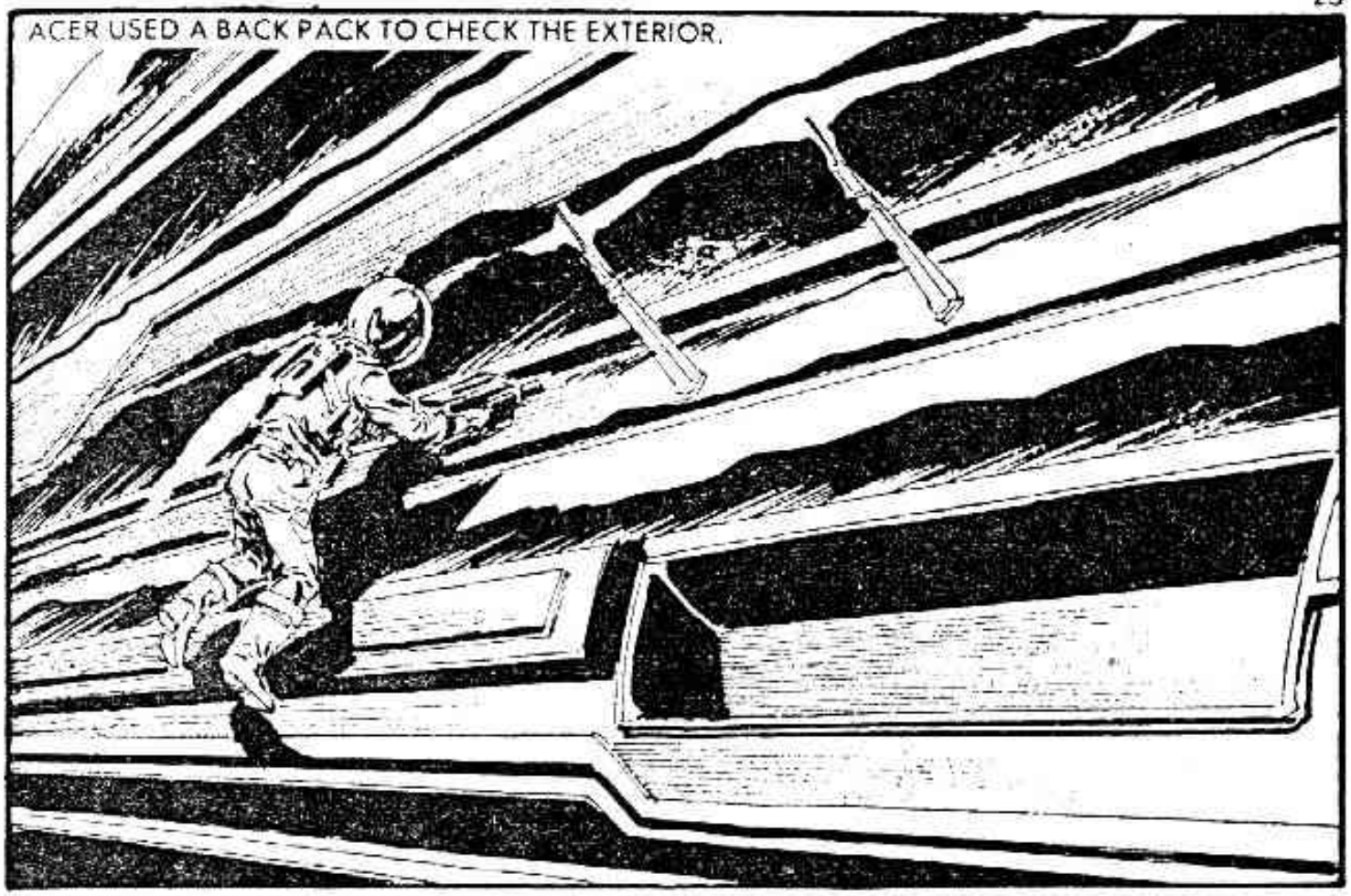
COMPUTER—IF ANYTHING COMES NEAR THE PORT QUARTER, LET 'EM HAVE IT. DECTHO, PREPARE TO TAKE EVASIVE ACTION.
MALFUNCTION IN THE REAR SHIELD. ONLY 40% POWER.
DON'T OUTRUN THEM, DECTHO. I WANT TO SMASH THEM ALL AT ONCE. NO-ONE MUST REPORT BACK TO ARKA, SO COMPUTE A GAP IN THEIR FIRING, AND FIRE BACK.
THE ARKANS OPENED FIRE. SHOCK WAVES SMACKED ACROSS THE AVENGING ANGEL'S FORCE SHIELDS.

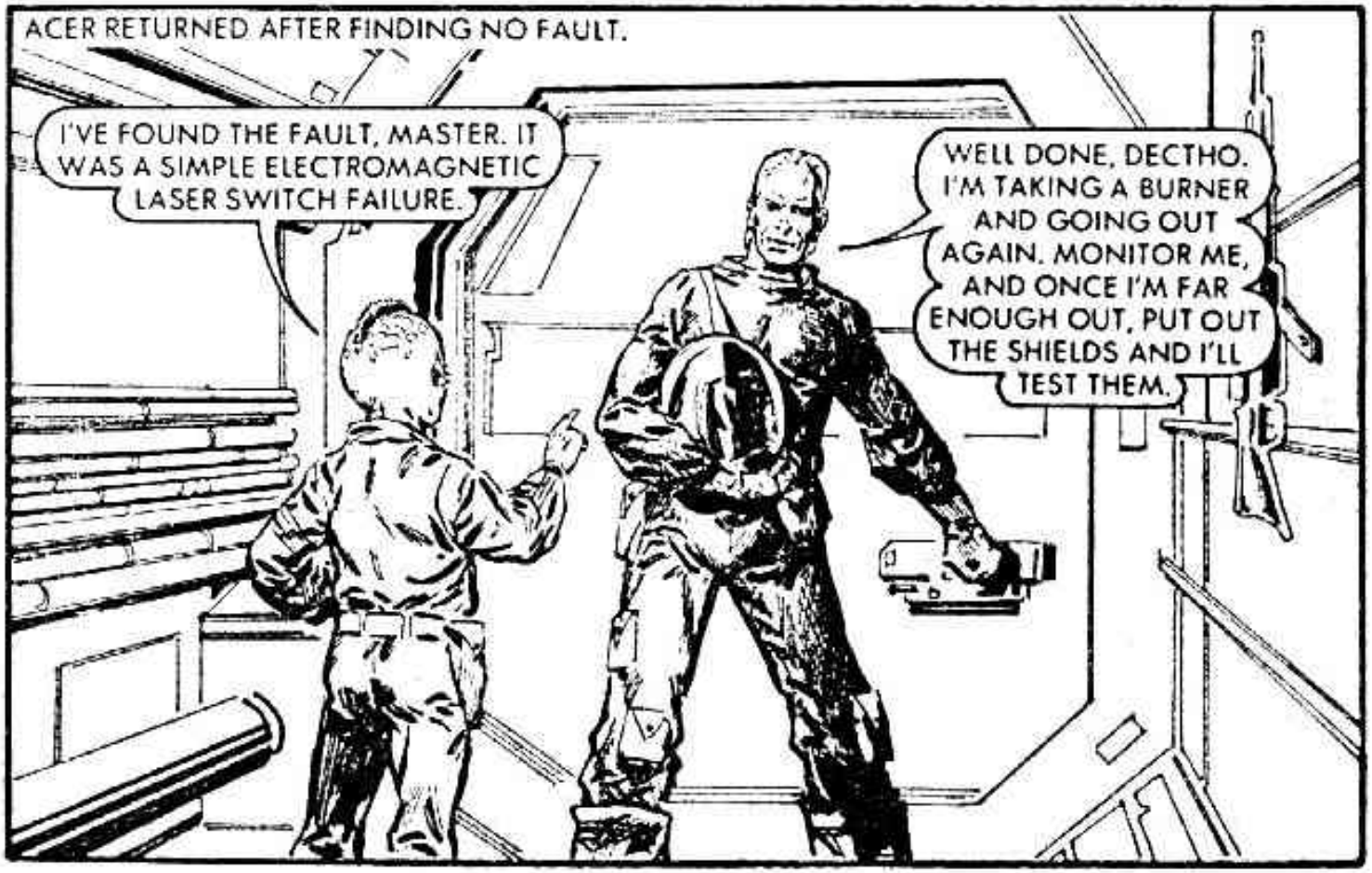
eldubya/iodineprles

ACER HAD HARDLY SPOKEN WHEN THE LASER CANNON OPENED UP.
THE FREIGHTER'S ESCAPED, MASTER. IT IS HEADING FOR THE PLANET'S SURFACE.


A LARGE SECTION OF THE PLANET'S SURFACE ROLLED BACK AND THE FREIGHTER ENTERED.

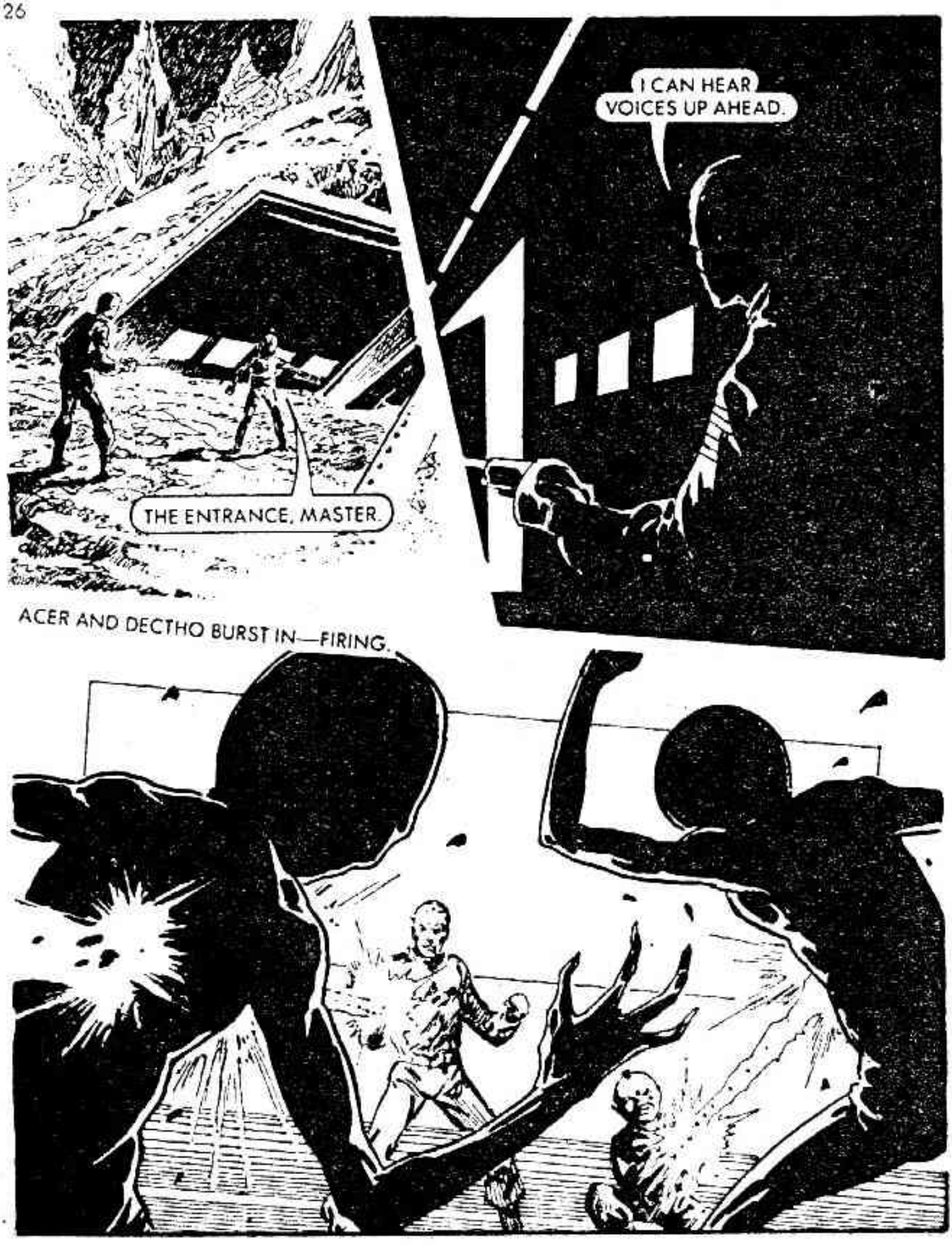
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE LOST THEM, MASTER. WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
FIRST, WE'D BETTER TAKE A LOOK AT THAT REAR FORCE SHIELD.


ACER USED A BACK PACK TO CHECK THE EXTERIOR.


ACER RETURNED AFTER FINDING NO FAULT.
I'VE FOUND THE FAULT, MASTER. IT WAS A SIMPLE ELECTROMAGNETIC LASER SWITCH FAILURE.
WELL DONE, DECTHO. I'M TAKING A BURNER AND GOING OUT AGAIN. MONITOR ME, AND ONCE I'M FAR ENOUGH OUT, PUT OUT THE SHIELDS AND I'LL TEST THEM.

THE SHIELDS ARE OUT, MASTER. FIRE WHEN YOU'RE READY.
ACER SET THE BURNER TO EMPTY ITS ENTIRE MAGNON CHAMBER IN ONE MIGHTY BURST—ENOUGH TO DESTROY A SMALL TOWN.
GOOD AS NEW!
WITH THE REAR FORCE SHIELD FULLY OPERATIONAL, ACER AND DECTHO PREPARED TO GO DOWN ONTO THE PLANET.
I'VE INSTRUCTED COMP TO MONITOR US ALL THE WAY. THE CANNON ARE SO ACCURATE THEY COULD TAKE OFF A MAN'S MOUSTACHE DOWN THERE. IF ANYTHING APPROACHES US, THE CANNON WILL OPEN UP.

THE SHUTTLE DESCENDED SAFELY.
I'M NOT GETTING ANY READINGS, MASTER. I DON'T THINK THEY'VE SPOTTED US.
AS THEY STEPPED OUT OF THE SHUTTLE.
ROKAS! THANK GOODNESS FOR THE ANGEL'S CANNON.


THE ENTRANCE, MASTER.
I CAN HEAR VOICES UP AHEAD.
ACER AND DECTHO BURST IN—FIRING.

eldubya/iodineprest

ACER AND DECTHO REACHED A LARGE CAVERN.
ARKAN FIGHTERS! THIS IS AN EXCHANGE POINT. ARKANS BRING FIGHTERS HERE TO EXCHANGE FOR TRYPZIUM.

KEEP FIRING, DECTHO. I'M GOING TO SET MY BURNER TO DESTRUCT AND THROW IT DOWN THERE.
ACER'S BURNER EXPLODED BEHIND THEM AS THEY MADE FOR THE SHUTTLE.
ANGEL COMPUTER—COMPUTE THE SOURCE OF THAT FIRING AND FIRE TWICE FOR EVERY SHOT THEY MAKE.

eldubya/lodineprie

THE CANNON COVERED THEM AS THEY MADE THEIR WAY BACK TO THE ANGEL IN THE SHUTTLE.
ARKAN CRAFT SWEPT TOWARDS THE AVENGING ANGEL.
THE ANGEL WILL HAVE TO DROP THE SHIELDS TO LET US IN, WHICH WILL GIVE THESE REBELS A CRACK AT HER HULL. COMPUTE A GAP IN THEIR FIRING AND THEN GIVE THEM THE WORKS.

I DON'T THINK WE'LL HAVE ANY FURTHER TROUBLE FROM THEM.
THE COMPUTER INFORMED ACER THAT ONLY ARKANS WERE IN THE AREA.
THE CANNON RAINED DOWN A HAIL OF DESTRUCTION.

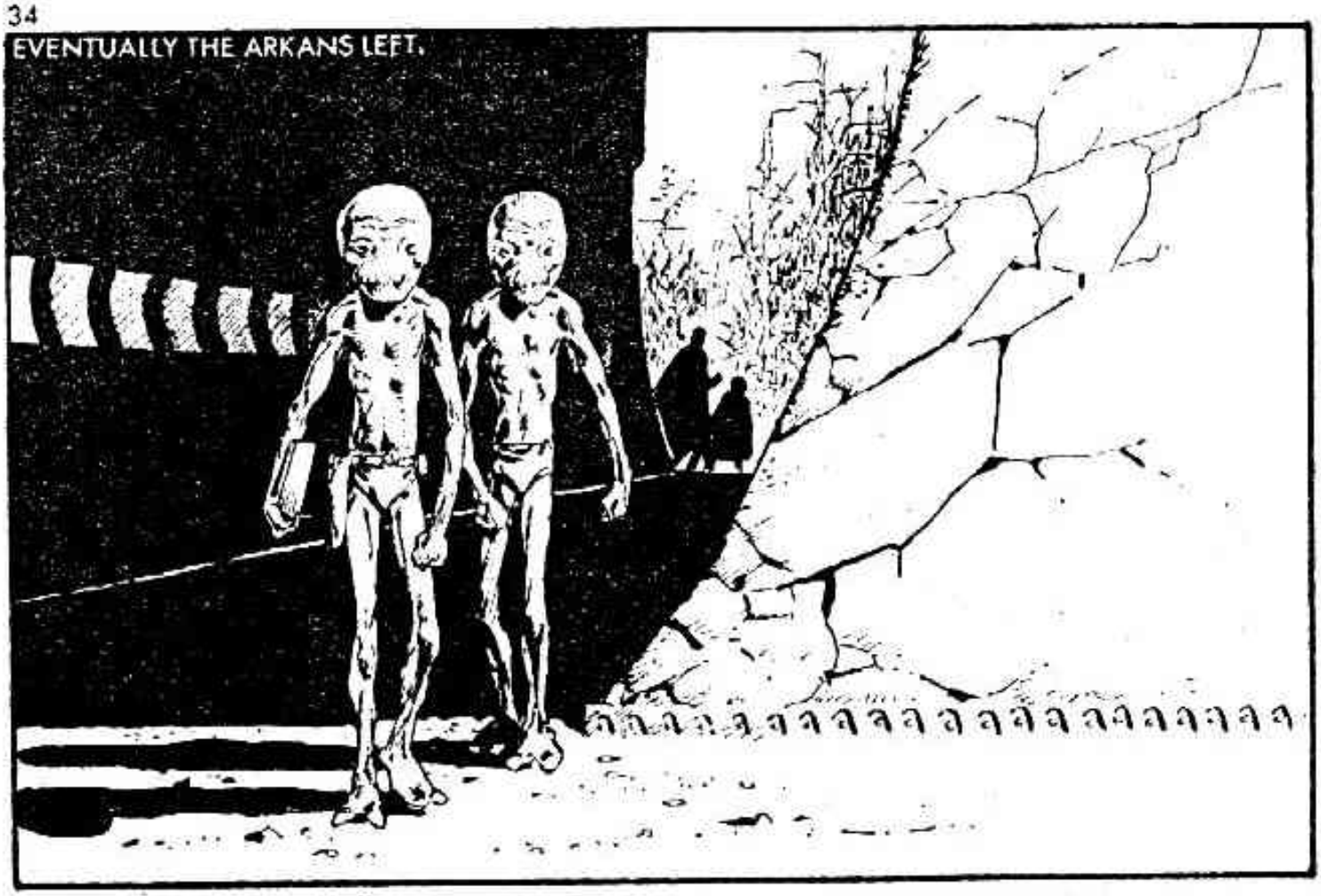
THE AVENGING ANGEL TURNED AND HEADED FOR GALLIPHOLA.

SCAN THE WHOLE SURFACE OF GALLIPHOLA FOR TRYPZIUM TRACES
I DON'T LIKE THIS PLACE, MASTER. THE GALLIPHOLANS WOULD SLIT OUR THROATS IF THEY KNEW WE WERE HERE

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. THAT PERCENTAGE OF TRYPZIUM ISN'T WORTH MINING.
WEAK BUT STEADY TRYPZIUM TRACE STRENGTH 0.099
I HAVE A HORRIBLE FEELING THAT WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GO DOWN THERE.

USING AN ANTI-DETECTION SHIELD THEY SHUTTLED DOWN TO PURIS, THE LARGEST PORT.
LOTS OF LIFE HERE, MASTER.
I ONLY HOPE A PATROL DOESN'T DECIDE TO QUESTION US.

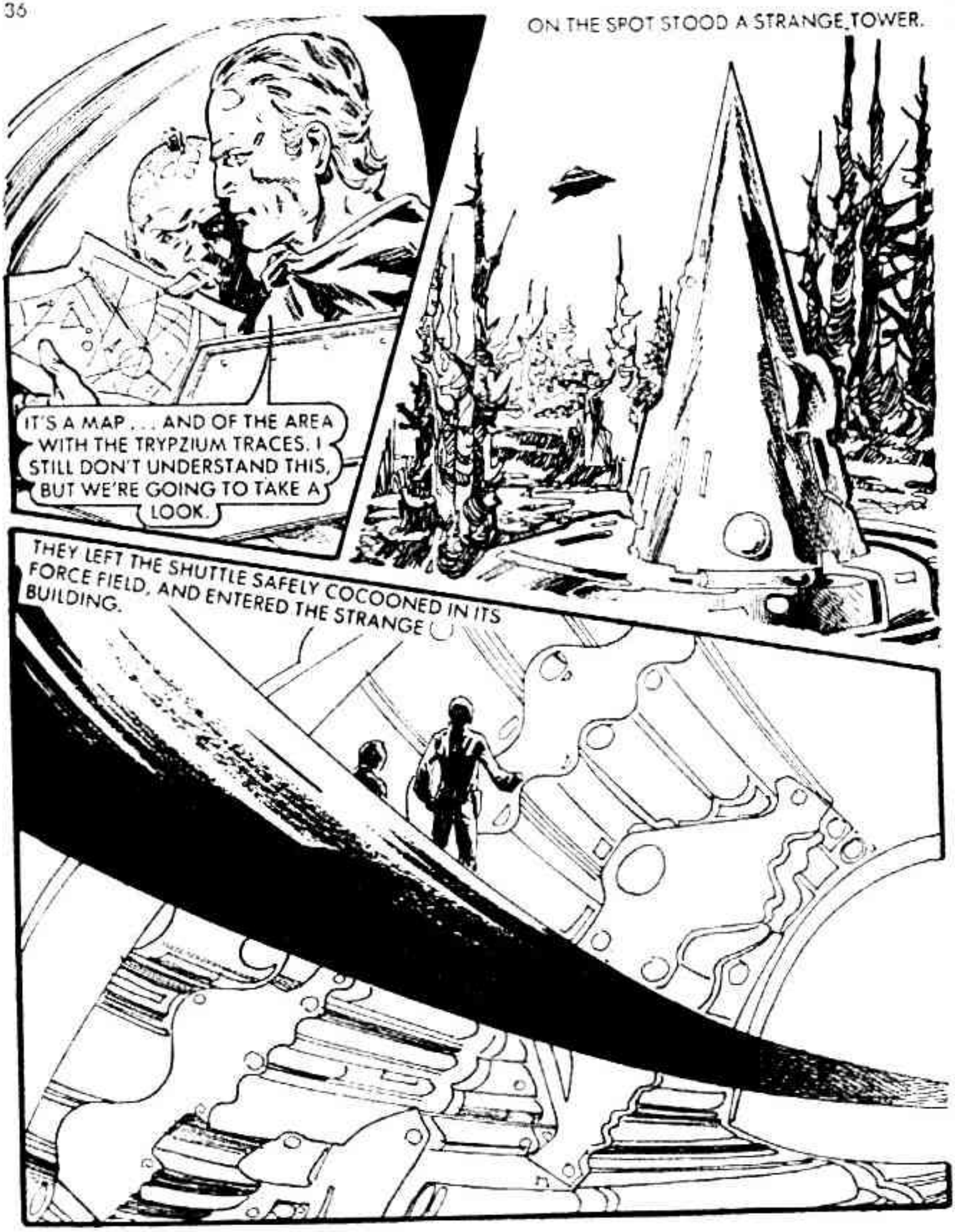
ACER SPOTTED TWO ARKANS IN A LIQUID REPLENISHMENT CENTRE.
WE'LL FOLLOW THESE ARKANS WHEN THEY LEAVE. I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT'S IN THAT CASE.


EVENTUALLY THE ARKANS LEFT.

DECTHO, GET THAT CASE—I'LL MAKE SURE WE'RE NOT SEEN.

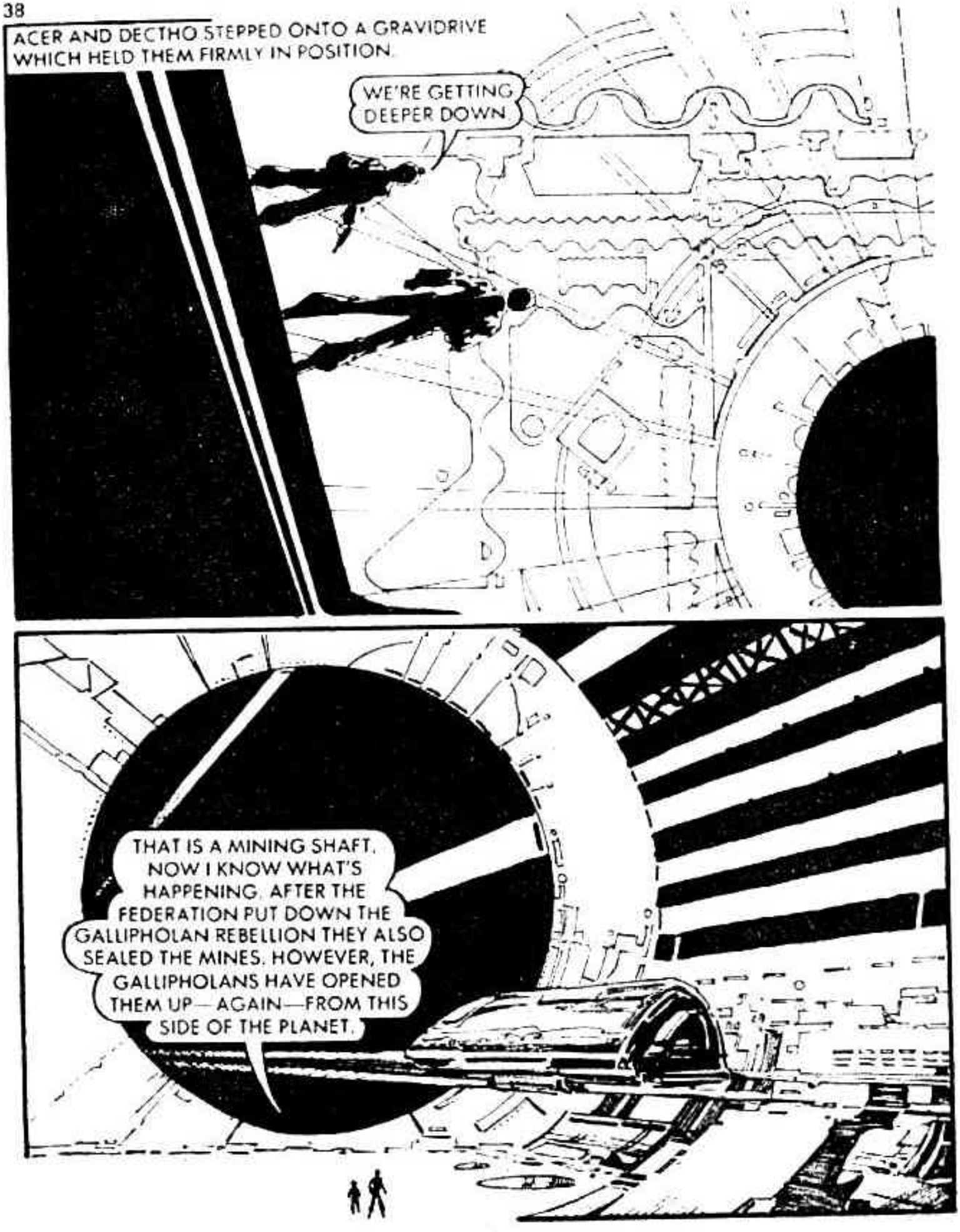
DECTHO'S SWIFT ATTACK CAUGHT THE ARKANS OFF GUARD.

AS THEY BLASTED BACK TO THE AVENGING ANGEL.
NOW LET'S SEE WHAT THAT CASE HAS TO OFFER.


ON THE SPOT STOOD A STRANGE TOWER.
IT'S A MAP . . . AND OF THE AREA WITH THE TRYPZIUM TRACES. I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS, BUT WE'RE GOING TO TAKE A LOOK.
THEY LEFT THE SHUTTLE SAFELY COCOONED IN ITS FORCE FIELD, AND ENTERED THE STRANGE BUILDING.

eldubya/lodnepries

WHERE'S THAT WIND COMING FROM, MASTER?
OVER THERE. FROM WHAT LOOKS LIKE A TUNNEL ENTRANCE. QUIET. SOMEONE'S COMING.
THESE CRYSTALS IN THE CASES ARE TRYPZIUM.


ACER AND DECTHO STEPPED ONTO A GRAVIDRIVE WHICH HELD THEM FIRMLY IN POSITION.
WE'RE GETTING DEEPER DOWN
THAT IS A MINING SHAFT. NOW I KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING. AFTER THE FEDERATION PUT DOWN THE GALLIPHOLAN REBELLION THEY ALSO SEALED THE MINES. HOWEVER, THE GALLIPHOLANS HAVE OPENED THEM UP—AGAIN—FROM THIS SIDE OF THE PLANET.

A CAPSULE VANISHED DOWN THE VACTUBE, AND ANOTHER APPEARED.
DOORS OPENED AND MANY FIGURES STEPPED OUT.
THEY MUST HAVE EVERY SPECIES IN THE GALAXY WORKING DOWN HERE AND SO DON'T SUSPECT US.
THIS IS ABOUT TO LEAVE— GET ON!

AFTER A SHORT, HIGH-SPEED JOURNEY THE TRANSPORTER SLOWED DOWN.
WE'RE AT THE FACE.

eldubyaflodinepriest

THE CAPSULE BEGAN ITS RETURN JOURNEY.

DECTHO—WE MUST DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE PLACE.

THE CAPSULE RETURNED TO THE TRYPZIUM STORAGE DEPOT, AND AGAIN, THEIR PRESENCE DID NOT SEEM TO CAUSE ANY SURPRISE.

ONCE WE'RE BACK IN THE SHUTTLE, WE CAN WORK OUT WHAT TO DO.
THEY HEADED BACK TOWARDS WHERE THEY'D LEFT THE SHUTTLE.

LOWER HER DOWN BY YOUR REMOTE CONTROL, DECTHO. WE'VE SEEN ENOUGH FOR NOW.

THE BEAST LUNGED AT DECTHO.

A SIXTH SENSE MADE ACER SWING ROUND.
NO, YOU DON'T.

eldubya/lodinepries

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ACER ENTERED THE STORES COMPARTMENT.

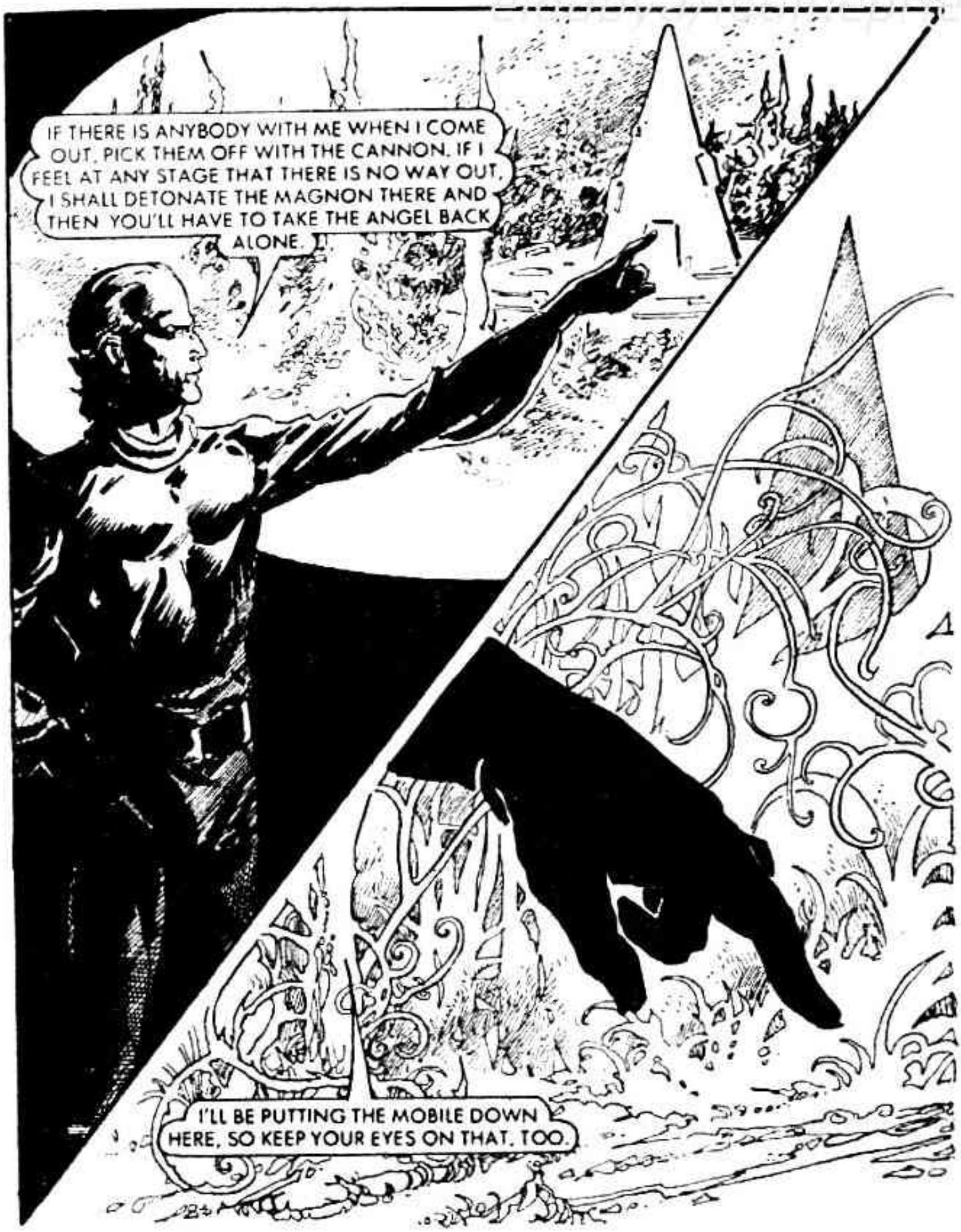
COMP, CONSULT YOUR MACHINERY FILES. I NEED A SMALL ITEM OF EQUIPMENT WHICH COULD BE USED ON GALLIPHOLA, PREFERABLY IN A MINING OPERATION.

AIR CONDITIONER,
FREE STANDING
SUITABLE FOR SUBTERR
CAN HANDL
FOUR MILLION CUBIC C
PER PERIOD. FILTER
AS WELL AS MAINT
TEMPERATURE AS

THIS WILL DO NICELY.

I WANT YOU TO GO DOWN TO THE ARMOURY, AND GET ENOUGH MAGNON TO STUFF THAT FULL. BRING AN ELECTRON DETONATOR AS WELL.
TAKE ALL THE WORKS OUT, DECTHO. JUST LEAVE IN THE SWITCHES.
ACER TOOK NO TIME TO FINISH THE BOMB.
WHEN DO WE LEAVE, MASTER?
WE DON'T. THIS TIME I'M GOING ALONE . . .

I WANT YOU TO MONITOR ME EVERY INCH OF THE WAY. USE MAXIMUM FOCUS ON THE VISUPANEL. I'M GOING TO SET THE MAGNON TO GO OFF IN A QUARTER CYCLE. THERE WILL BE NO WAY OF STOPPING IT ONCE IT'S SET.
THERE'LL BE NOTHING YOU CAN DO WHEN I ENTER THE MINE, BUT YOU MUST WATCH THE SCREEN AT ALL TIMES.


IF THERE IS ANYBODY WITH ME WHEN I COME OUT, PICK THEM OFF WITH THE CANNON. IF I FEEL AT ANY STAGE THAT THERE IS NO WAY OUT, I SHALL DETONATE THE MAGNON THERE AND THEN YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE THE ANGEL BACK ALONE.
I'LL BE PUTTING THE MOBILE DOWN HERE, SO KEEP YOUR EYES ON THAT, TOO.

YOU SURE YOU WANT TO GO ALONE, MASTER?
I'D RATHER NOT, DECTHO, BUT IF I GET STUCK, I'LL NEED YOU TO COME AND GET ME OUT.

eldubya/iodinepriest

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HE LEFT IT HOVERING IN ITS FORCE FIELD.

eldubya/lodineprie

I'VE MADE IT TO THE GRAVITY WALKWAY.
AN ARKAN WATCHED AS ACER LOADED THE BOMB ON TO A FREIGHT CONTAINER.
IT'S HOT DOWN THERE.

eldubya/lodinepries

THE PATHWAY CARRIED ACER NEARER AND NEARER TO SAFETY.
SO FAR SO GOOD . . .
MADE IT! DECTHO . . . ARE YOU GETTING ANYTHING?
THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE OUT, MASTER. THE AREA'S ALIVE WITH PATROLS. SOMEONE MUST HAVE SEEN YOU LANDING.
ACER HID FROM A PATROL.

THEY'VE DISCOVERED THE SHUTTLE, DECTHO. START A STEADY BURST OF FIRE NEAR THE MINE ENTRANCE. NOT TOO MUCH, THOUGH. I'M STILL FAIRLY CLOSE.

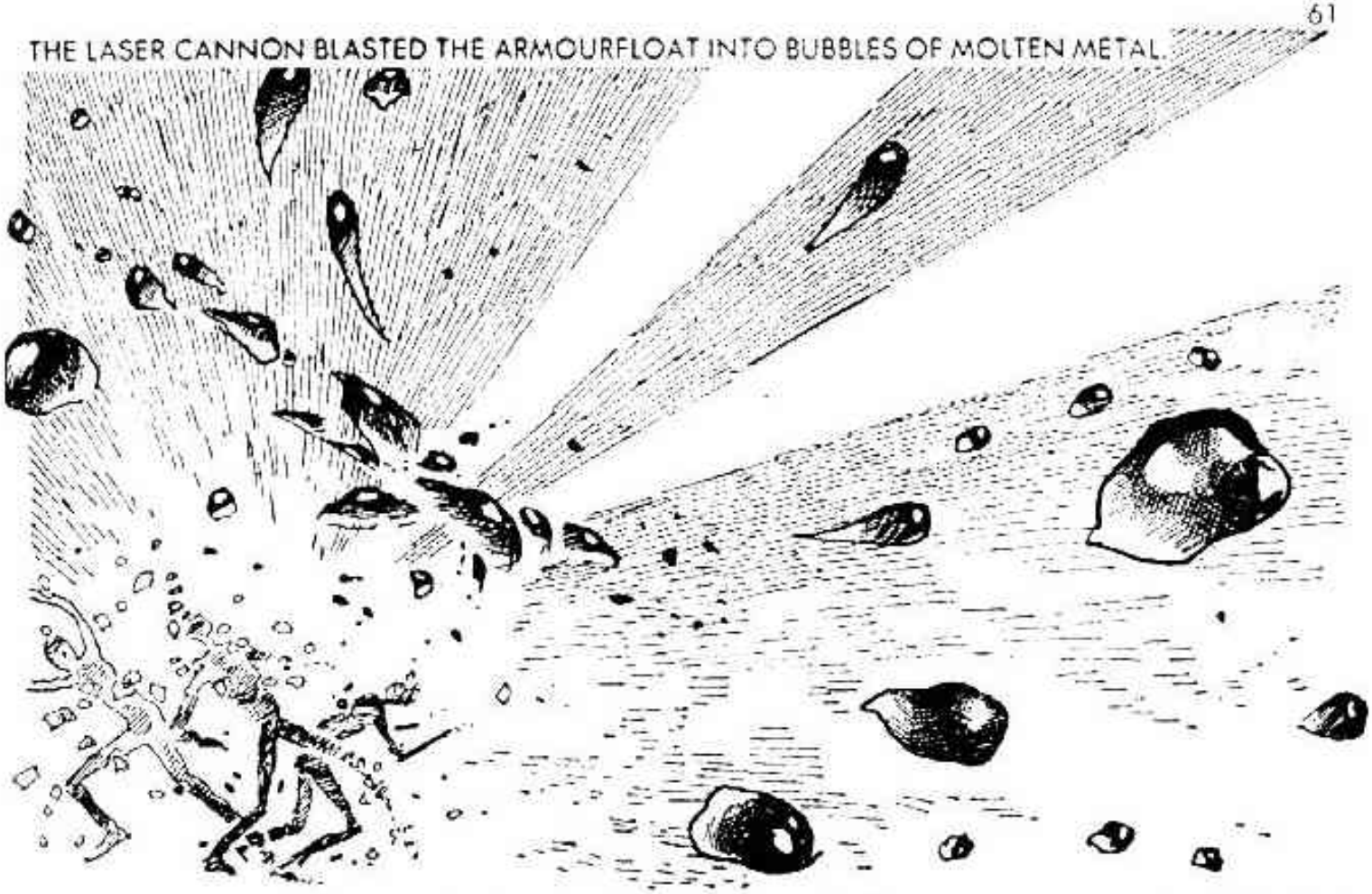
NOT TOO CLOSE, DECTHO . . . YOU NEARLY GOT ME.

THE EXCHANGE OF FIRE WAS BRIEF, BUT ONE OF THE GALLIPHOLANS SCORED A HIT.

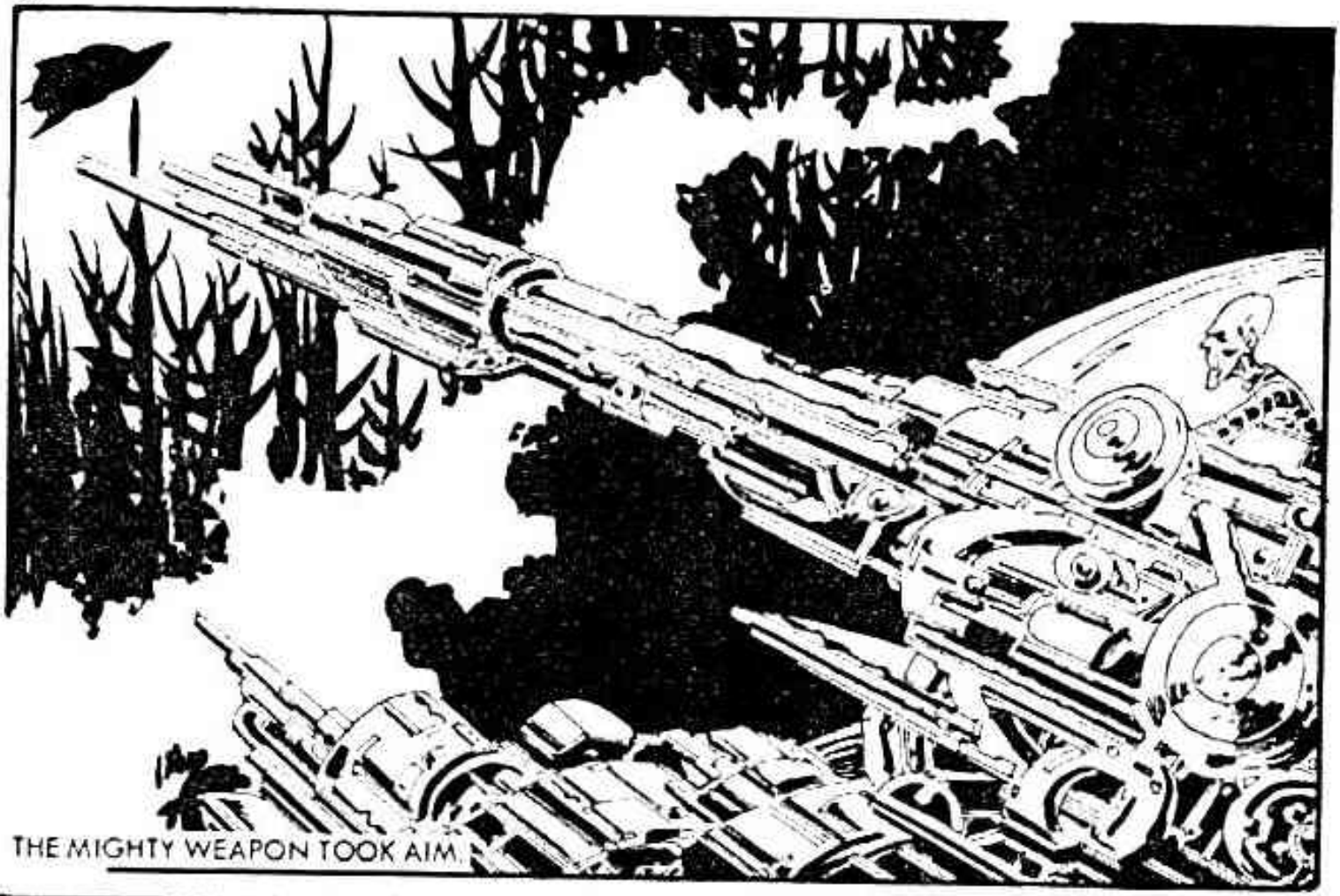
DECTHO, I'M HIT. START PICKING OFF ANYONE WHO THREATENS ME. HOW MUCH TIME DO I HAVE LEFT?
ABOUT EIGHTEEN CYCLETS, MASTER.
MY FALL MUST HAVE DAMAGED THE REMOTE FORCE SHIELD CONTROL. I CAN'T SEEM TO GET HER DOWN.
I'LL TRY IT FROM HERE, MASTER.

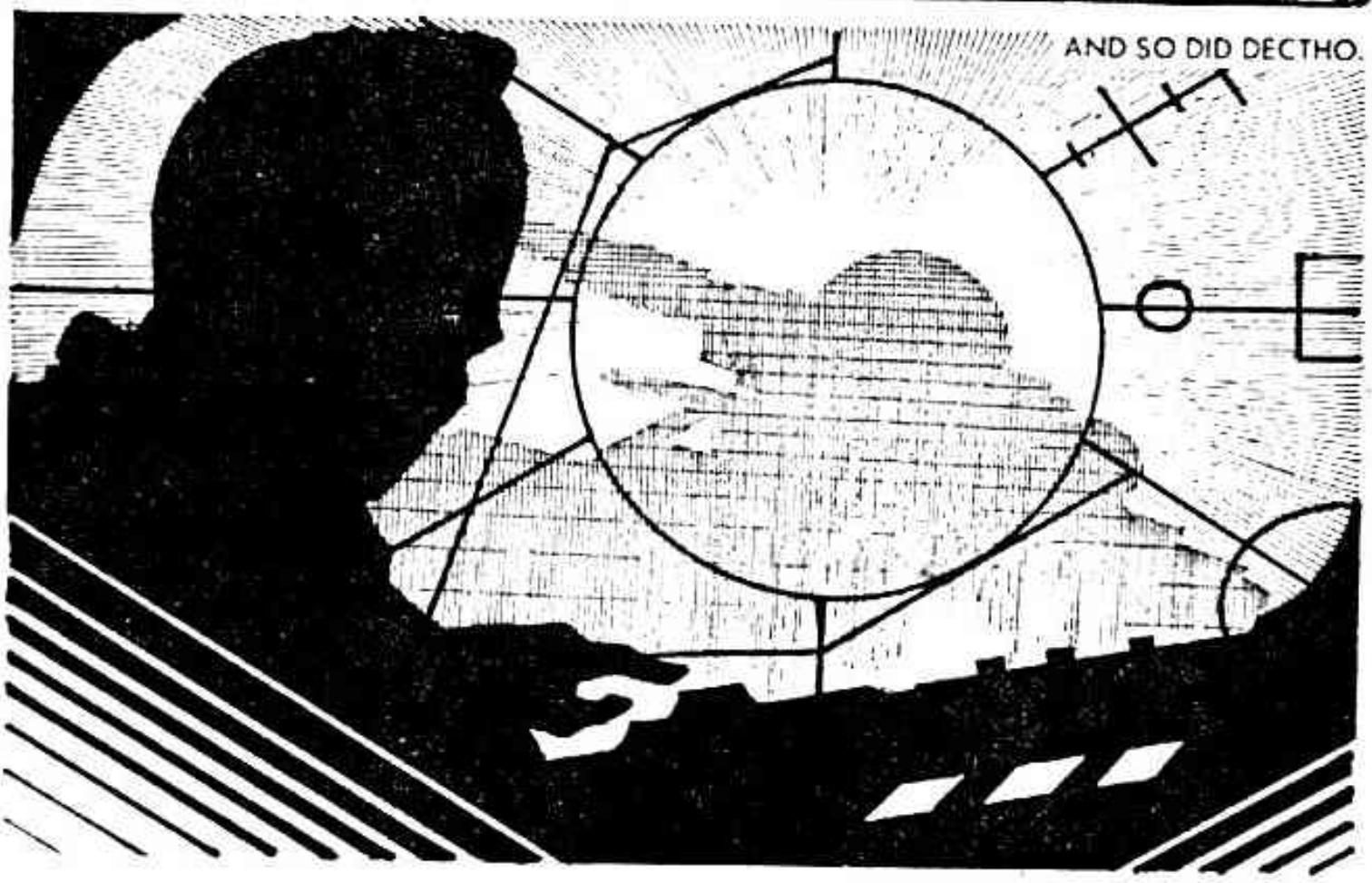
IT'S COMING, DECTHO. MUST BE A VERY WEAK SIGNAL. KEEP TRYING.
THE MOBILE SLOWLY DESCENDED AS ACER'S TIME EBBED AWAY.
IF I CAN JUST GET INSIDE AND GET THE SHIELDS BACK UP.
GET THOSE SHIELDS BACK UP FAST, DECTHO.

MORE COVERING FIRE. THOSE SHIELDS ARE TAKING TOO LONG. HOW MUCH TIME LEFT?
SEVEN CYCLETS, MASTER. THE SHIELDS FAIL TO RESPOND.
AS DECTHO STRUGGLED TO STRENGTHEN THE SHIELDS, GALLIPHOLAN FIREPOWER DAMAGED THE TINY SHUTTLE.
SHE'S HAD IT, DECTHO. TOO MUCH DAMAGE. I'LL NEVER GET HER AWAY. YOU'LL HAVE TO COME AND GET ME. GIVE THOSE GALLIPHOLANS UNDER THE ARMOURFLOAT A GOOD BLAST FIRST.


THE LASER CANNON BLASTED THE ARMOURFLOAT INTO BUBBLES OF MOLTEN METAL.

AS DECTHO SWOOPED DOWN, THE GALLIPHOLANS BROUGHT IN SPECIAL SHIELD-PIERCING WEAPONS.
LOOKS AS IF I'M JUST IN TIME.


THE MIGHTY WEAPON TOOK AIM.


AND SO DID DECTHO.

THE AVENGING ANGEL RAINED FIRE ON THE ARKAN WAR-MACHINE.
KNOCKED ASIDE BY THE EXPLOSION, THE SHUTTLE'S FORCE FIELD SLOWLY WITHERED.
GOOD SHOOTING, DECTHO. HOW MUCH TIME LEFT?
SIX CYCLETS, MASTER. I'M COMING IN.
THE ARKAN SURFACE BATTERIES OPENED FIRE.
THEIR AUTOMATIC DEFENCES ARE OPENING UP, MASTER.
THE ANGEL CAN HANDLE IT, DECTHO. COME AND GET ME.

LAY PLENTY OF COVERING FIRE BEFORE YOU DROP THE SHIELDS, DECTHO. I DON'T WANT THE ANGEL DAMAGED.
DECTHO SENT DOWN A RECOVERY CLAW.

eldubya/rodineprieto

THE EXPLOSION RIPPED THROUGH THE PLANET, PULVERISING ANY TRYPZIUM, MAKING IT USELESS. THE ARKAN MENACE HAD BEEN DEALT WITH BY ACER ANGEL, DECTHO AND THE MIGHTY AVENGING ANGEL.

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STARBLAZERS
IN THE CONQUEST OF SPACE 24
In April, 1966, the Russians launched a moon probe called Luna 10. Most people thought that the craft would soft-land on the Moon, but instead the craft fired a retro rocket and slowed down enough to be caught by lunar gravity. It entered orbit, and began taking photographs like the one seen here.